

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 PM-09 INR-10 L-03 NEA-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 GAC-01 USIA-12 TRSE-00

MBFR-03 SAJ-01 H-02 NSC-10 SS-15 NIC-01 OMB-01 RSR-01

/121 W

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R 051327 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8538

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN 2854

AMEMBASSY BUHCAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

SECDEC WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 5071

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, UR

SUBJ: MOSCOW DIPLOMATIC VIEWS ON LENIN SHAKE- UP

REF: MOSCOW 4854

1. SUMMARY: MAY 3 NATO COUNSELORS MEETING WAS PRIMARILY
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DEVOTED TO ANALYSIS OF RESULTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF APRIL 26-27
CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM. WHILE THERE WAS GENERAL AGREEMENT
WITH EMBASSY ANALYSIS (REFTEL, THERE WERE ALSO SOME INTEREST-
ING OBSERVATIONS AND DIFFERENCES OF EMPHASIS; NOTABLE: U. K.

CONCERN OVER HARD- LINE OVERTONES OF DECREE AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS WHICH BREZHNEV MAY HAVE WITH " COMPROMISE" POLIT- BURO; CANADIAN SPECULATION ABOUT DEVELOPMENT OF CABINET- TYPE GOVERNMENT: AND FRG CONVICTION THAT TROIKA IS FORMALLY DEAD. ANALYSIS BELOW REPRESENTS SUMMARY OF OPINIONS OF NATO COLLEAGUES PLUS ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND VIEWS DEVELOPED BY EMBASSY. END SUMMARY.

2. NATO COUNSELORS WERE UNANIMOUS IN THEIR IMPRESSION THAT BREZHNEV HAS STRENGTHENED HIS POSITION AND SUPPORT FOR " DETENTE" POLICY, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT- TERM, (E. G., BY OUSTER OF SOME OPPONENTS, PLENUM' S " COMPLETE AGREEMENT" WITH BREZHNEV' S REPORT TO PLENUM, FACT PLENUM DECREE RECEIVED " UNANIMOUS" APPROVAL. AS ILLUSTRATION OF GROWING " CULT OF PERSONALITY," UK NOTED 48 REFERENCES TO BREZHNEV ON ONE PAGE OF MAY 2 PRAVDA. FRG CONCLUDED FROM SUBMERSION OF KOSYGIN AND PODGORNIY IN ALPHABETICAL LISTING OF PORTRAITS, WITH BREZHNEV PLACED AHEAD OF ANDROPOV, THAT TROIKA HAS BEEN FORMALLY BURIED. ACCORDING TO CANADIANS, CHINESE EMBASSY VIEWS DISAPPEARANCE OF TROIKA AS CULMINATION OF SLOW BREZHNEV PROCESS OF CONSOLIDATING HIS POWER.

3. UK COUNSELOR AND TO LESSER EXTENT FRG COUNSELOR EXPRESSED VIEW THAT BREZHNEV HAD CREATED POTENTIALLY SERIOUS PROBLEM FOR HIMSELF BY AGREEING, APPARENTLY UNDER SOME PRESSURE, TO ELEVATE HEADS OF THREE POWERFUL FOREIGN POLICY INVOLVED INSTITUTIONS TO THE POLITBURO. UK COUNSELOR ARGUED WITH SOME PERSUASION THAT, EVEN IF INCUMBENT MINISTERS ARE BREZHNEV ALLIES, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR BREZHNEV TO ELIMINATE POSITIONS FROM POLITBURO IN THE FUTURE IF NEW MINISTERS ARE LESS PLIABLE.

4. FRENCH PASSED ON REPORT FROM SOVIET JOURNALIST THAT POLITBURO LINEUP BEFORE PLENUM WAS 8-7 IN BREZHNEV' S FAVOR AND NOW IS 11-5. OPPOSITION (OR NON- ALIGNED) NOW REPORTEDLY CONSIST OF SUSLOV, PELSHE, KIRILENKO (WHO HAS ALLEGEDLY MOVED AWAY FROM BREZHNEV) POLYANSKIY, SHELEPIN. POLYANSKIY WAS CONFIDENTIAL

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ALLEGEDLY ALSO SCHEDULED FOR THE AXE BUT WAS SAVED BY NEED FOR HIS AGRICULTURAL EXPERTISE. FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH, CANADIAN AMB. FORD WHO ACCOMPANIED HEAD OF WHEAT BOARD TO SEE POLYANSKIY APRIL 26 REPORTED THAT HE SEEMED FULLY CONFIDENT AND IN COMMAND OF HIS MINISTRY.

5. RECENT LECTURER IN LENINGRAD BITTERLY DENOUNCED SHELEST AS " NATIONALIST" AND " SEPARATIST" BUT CLAIMED THAT VORONOV HAD " REALLY" ASKED TO RESIGN FOR REASONS OF HEALTH. IN RETROSPECT BREZHNEV STOP- OVER IN KIEV IN LATE FEBRUARY EN ROUTE TO PRAGUE (MENTIONED IN LOCAL PRESS BUT NOT IN CENTRAL PAPERS) PROBABLY RELATED DIRECTLY TO UPCOMING PURGE OF SHELEST. REPORTEDLY SHELEST' S BOOK, WHICH WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SHARPLY

CRITICIZED IN APRIL ISSUE OF "KOMMUNIST UKRAINY" DISAPPEARED FROM BOOKSTORES ABOUT THAT TIME. THUS IT APPEARS THAT SHELEST'S FATE WAS PROBABLY SEALED IN FEBRUARY ABOUT TIME WHEN FULL-SCALE MEDIA BUILD-UP OF BREZHNEV BEGAN TO DEVELOP (MOSCOW 2608). NATO COLLEAGUE TEND TO ASCRIBE SHELEST AND VORONOV DOWNFALL TO FOREIGNPOLICY QUESTIONS, ARGUING THAT IF ECONOMY WERE INVOLVED, THEY WOULD HAVE FALLEN LAST DECEMBER WHEN THERE WAS AN ECONOMIC PLENUM (WE FEEL THAT WAS NO TIME TO HINT AT DISUNITY). FRG COUNS RECALLED WEST GERMAN PRESS REPORT THAT VORONOV HAD HAD CLOSE TIES TO ULBRICHT. WE REMAIN UNCONVINCED; BREZHNEV MAY SIMPLY HAVE FOUND IT EASIER TO DUMP OPPONENTS ON "MOTHERHOOD" ISSUE OF DETENTE RATHER THAN MORE STICKY ECONOMIC QUESTIONS.

6. THERE IS SOME DIFFERENCE OF EMPHASIS BETWEEN UK ANALYSIS (AS NOTED IN LONDON'S 5200) OF DEVELOPMENTS AT PLENUM AND OUR OWN VIEW. UK IS MORE CONVINCED THAN WE THAT APPOINTMENT OF HEADS OF KGB, DEFENSE AND FOREIGN AFFAIR ESTABLISHMENTS REPRESENTED COMPROMISE FORCED UPON BREZHNEV FOR WHICH HE WILL HAVE TO PAY IN SHORT RATHER THAN LONGER TERM. WE ARE MORE INCLINED TO SEE IN RESHAPING OF POLITBURO IN OLD STALIN-DAY IMAGE AND APPOINTMENT OF FOREIGNPOLICY-ASSOCIATED MINISTERS TO THIS AUGUST BODY AN EFFORT INTER ALIA TO REASSURE THE MORE DOCTRINAIRE ELEMENTS IN PARTY THAT, FINALLY, THE COUNTRY HAS THE STRONG HAND AT THE HELM THAT IT HAS LONG NEEDED. BEING A SKILLFUL POLITICIAN, BREZHNEV MAY HAVE DELIBERATELY MADE HIMSELF LESS VULNERABLE TO CRITICISM, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME SURROUNDING HIMSELF WITH PEOPLE WHOSE GENERAL SUPPORT HE CONFIDENTIAL

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FEELS HE HAS ON MATTERS OF FOREIGN POLICY. IN THIS CONNECTION, THERE IS SOME FEELING, CERTAINLY IN THIS EMBASSY, THAT GRECHKO IS NOT ONLY A BREZHNEV SUPPORTER BUT SUPERANNUATED AND PROBABLY NOT A VERY EFFECTIVE SPOKESMAN FOR MILITARY VIEW-POINT COMPARED TO A GENERAL KULIKOV -- IN TOSE RARE CASES WHERE MILITARY BRANCHES CAN BE EXPECTED TO HAVE COMMON VIEWPOINT. MFA OFFICIAL ARGUED THAT MFA POSITION HAS INDEED BEEN STRENGTHENED AND THAT GROMYKO HAD TO BE PROMOTED IF GRECHKO WAS.

7. CONSISTENT WITH ITS MORE PESSIMISTIC ANALYSIS, UK ATTRIBUTES MORE IMPORTANCE THAN ITS NATO COLLEAGUES TO ELEMENTS OF PLENUM DECREE AND PARTICULAR PRAVDA APRIL 29 LEADER STRESSING HARD-LINE IDEOLOGICAL ELEMENTS, E. G., FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF "ECONOMIC AND DEFENSE MIGHT OF SOCIALIST COMMONWEALTH," NEED FOR "VIGILANCE" AND PREPAREDNESS TO "REBUFF... AGGRESSIVE IMPERIALIST CIRCLES" ETC. SINCE WE HAVE FELT THAT BREZHNEV HAS SENSED NEED TO DEFEND "DETENTE" POLICY AGAINST PARTY SKEPTICS, WE TEND VIEW IDEOLOGICAL BAGGAGE AS EFFORT TO DEMONSTRATE (AS NOTED APRIL 29 PRAVDA) THAT "PEACE-LOVING" FOREIGN POLICY CAN ALSO BE "REVOLUTIONARY." PRAVDA'S LIST

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R 051327 Z MAY 73
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 5071

OF ACHIEVEMENTS OF " PEACE- PROGRAM," (INCLUDING ENDING OF GDR
" BLOCKADE" AND INCREASED WORLD CP AND FRONT ACTIVITY)
CARRY DEFENSIVE RING. WHERE WE AND UK AGREE IS THAT BREZHNEV
HAS A PROBLEM WITH " DETENTE" POLICY WHICH HAS NOT BEEN ENTIRELY
ELIMINATED BY HIS STRENGTHENED POSITION. CONTROVERSIAL
FOREIGN POLICY DECISION, E. G., SALT COULD STILL PROVOKE
DEBATE. ON OTHER HAND, IT MAY NOW BE EASIER TO PUSH THROUGH
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DECISIONS ON INTERNAL ECONOMIC AFFAIRS. THERE ARE FEWER
EFFECTIVELY WITH NEW MEMBERS. OTHERWISE HE WOULD NOT HAVE
AGREED TO THEIR APPOINTMENT AT A TIME WHEN HIS OWN POWER
POSITION WAS OBVIOUSLY SO STRONG. IT SERVES HIS PURPOSES

TODAY TO HAVE THEM ON THE POLITBURO, AND HE WILL FACE UP
TO ANY PROBLEMS WHICH THESE APPOINTMENTS MAY CAUSE HIM WHEN
HE HAS TO -- OPERATING FROM WHAT HE HOPES WIL THEN BE A
STILL STRONGER POSITION.
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